Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
10/14/76

Mr. Jack McKinney
Phila. Daily News
Phila., Pa.

Dear Jack,

Dick Sprague called me several nights ago. He wanted me to go in to see him. I started to tell him this was difficult for me as of the time he picked but I could when he interrupted to say he'd come up here next week. I let it go at that because on instinct I felt it might be better to get the feel of the man when he would be less likely to be interrupted and because it seemed that when he had a bunch of strangers (to me) around him I might be somewhat inhibited.

This changed last evening when one of his assistants who knows me phoned. We set a meeting for this coming Wednesday morning, the 20th. I'll be woth Sprague for a couple of morning hors and then will probably spend the rest of the day with others on the staff.

I write to ask your estimate of the man. Most of all, in your opinion is he as good as his word? I want to know whether I can depend on his word if he gives it to me. There are reasons. It boils down to the integrity of the investigation. I don't want to have anything to do with anything that is going to be less than honest or will in any way perpetuate this national trauma. On the other hand, I know what I can do for him if he is straight and will be as good as his word.

All indications are that the committee, which consulted me in advance on several levels, has taken the basic approach I urged: investigate these homicides as they would be handled in a prosecution and begin with establishing the basic fact of the homicides without any theorizing. This and my recommendation of him before I knew he'd been Specter's assistant may have led to him selection. The guy I talked out of taking the job is the one Downing sent to see me.

This can lead me to waste an awful lot of very good unpublished work if I make a misjudgement. On the other hand, I've already done most of his basic work and would give it to Sprague if I were confident of the possibilities of honest handling. So, I'd appreciate it if you could hit the horn with any beliefs or opinions of advice I can use. I'll be home Monday and Tuesday, except possibly for a brief errand.

If my typing is worse than you remember it is because I have to type sort of side-saddle sometimes. I had a heavy thrombophlebitis a year ago. It requires that I keep my legs up when I sit because I've lost most of the main veins in both legs and thighs. I've made a typewriter table that permits this but when it is cold the limited circulation makes my feet cold, so I have to keep them covered with a blanket, hence the side-saddle. But I'm not ready to cash chips. I was working at 5:30 this a.m. and I'm conducting a seminar for the Fund for Investigative Journalism in Washington this evening beginning at 5:30 p.m. I have DJ and FBI in court in three cases and I'm readying more. Despite the stonewalling it is working and I'm getting the stuff though they kick and scream. So I'm still with it.

Maybe I inherited this by being born 3 1/2 blocks south of old Shibe Park, 5 1/2 from the Phillies diamond, and developed it by mad dashes down the Reading tracks after balls that meant an admission.

Thanks and bes regards,